offices for 1994-95 are yet to be finalised.

(c) No, Sir. All villages are covered by postal services. Out of 810 gram pinchayat vilages, 602 have post offices. Of the remaining 208 villages only 2 villages justify post offices as per present norms.

(d) Question does not arise in view of replies to (a) to (c) above.

STD facilities in Andhra Pradesh

920. SHRI YERRA NARAYANASWAMY: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) what are the proposed steps to extend STD facility to more pla ces in West Godaveri District in Andhra Pradesh in 1994-95; and

(b) if so, the details of measures proposed to be taken to extend STD in Kest Godavari in 1994-95?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI SUKH RAM): (a) and (b) (i) Digital Trunk Automatic Exchange of 1000 lines capacity has been planned at Eluru in West Godaveri.

(ii) 7 more places namely; Paravalli, Veeravasaram, Vendra, Vegeswarapuram; Gundugolam, Koyyalagudem and Nallajerla in West Godaveri District are proposed to be linked to the STD network during 94-95 subject to the availability of resource such as funds equipment, land building etc.

Change in proecdure for allotting ISD/STD booths

921. SHRI AJIT P. K. JOGI: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have changed the priority pattern for allotting the ISD/STD booths to the weaker sections of the society;

(b) if so, the details with reasons therefor;

(c) whether Government propose to review this decision;

(d) if so, by when; and

(e) if not, the reasons thereior?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI SUKH RAM): (a) No, Sir.

(b) to (d) Does not arise in view of (a) above.

(e) The policy of Department of Teleom. in the matters of allotment of STD/ISD payphone is in consonance with the programme of the Government to provide greater employment opprtunities to educated unemployed by way of allotment of payphones. However preference is given to the following categories of persons while selecting the allottees:

(a) Handicapped including blind persons.

(b) SC/ST applicants.

(c) Ex-servicemen/War Widows.

(d) Retired DOT employees or their dependent.

(e) Dependents of Freedom Fighters.

(f) Charitable Institutions/Hospitals.

Waiting list of telephones in Karnataka

922. SHRI K. RAHMAN KHAN: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) what is the total number of waiting list of Telephones in Karnataka;

(b) whether Government are committed to clear this waiting list by

the end of the year as per the statement of the Hon'ble Minister for Communications at Bangalore;

(c) if so, how many new equipments are being added and what is the total cost of the new equipments;

(d) how much funds for installing the new equipments have been released so far and what is the balance funds to be released to Karnataka Telecom Circle; and

(e) by when Government will release the balance Fund to complete the work?

THE MINISTRY OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI SUKH RAM): (a) The total number of waiting list in Karnataka as on 30.6.94 is 1,76,813.

(b) Yes Sir.

(c) to (e) Rs. 308 crores has been released for Karnataka for carrying out capital works planned during 1994-95. The additional amount required, if any, will be considered at an appropriate time. However, additional equipment to be purchased on leasing basis will also be provided for this circle in order to liquidate the waiting list.

Increase in Excise Duty on machinery

923. SHRI RAJUBHAI A. PARMAR:
SHRIMATI VEENA VERMA:
SHRI SUSHILKUMAR SAMBHAJIRAO SHINDE:
SHRI RAJNI RANJAN SAHU:

Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to refer to the answer to Starred Question 181 given in the Rajya Sabha on 8th March, 1994 and state:

(a) what decision has since been taken on demands to issue a notification to waive the inadvertent increase in excise duty on machinery, plant and laboratory equipments which treats material by condensing or cooling other than refrigeration and airconditioning machinery under the head 84.19, for the period February 28 to April 23, 1993 and whether such notification has since been issued; if not, the reasons for the delay;

(b) the reason that the duty on those items was not reduced to 10 per cent as contemplated under the said head, in the Memorandum appended to the Finance Act Bill/Act, 1993 but was restored to the pre-budget level of 15 per cent; and

(c) whether responsibility for the unintended increase from 15 per cent to 110 per cent instead of reduction to 10 per cent under the said provisions has been fixed; if so, on whom and if not, the reasons thereor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI M. V. CHANDRASHEKHAR MURTHY): (a) The matter is still under active consideration with ference to the existing level provisions under the yentral excise law.

(b) The memorandum explaining the provisions in the Finance Bill, 1993 refer to reduction in excise duty in specified capital goods falling within Chapters 84 85 and 90 of the Central Excise Tariff. Since there was no intention to raise the duty on the goods described in part (a) of this question, it was decided to restors the pre-budget rate of 15 per cent on these goods.

(c) The description of the goods was changed without any intention of changing the scope of the exemption. The error was entirely due to inadvertance.